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IX. *An Account of West-River Mountain, and the Appearance of there having been a Volcano in it. In a Letter from DANIEL JONES, Esq; of Hindsdale, to the Rev. JOSEPH WILLARD. President of the University at Cambridge, V. Pres. A. A.*

Hindsdale, November 2, 1783.

S I R,

I RECEIVED your's of the 18th of August last, and observed the contents : and as I am not only willing, but desirous of doing all in my power to aid the literati in their pursuit of knowledge, immediately upon the receipt of your letter, (altho' I have often been upon *West-River Mountain*) repaired there again, with the best guides, and thoroughly explored the same.

The Mountain is situate about twelve miles north of *Massachusetts* line, on the east side of, and adjoining *Connecticut-River*, in the county of *Cheshire*, and state of *New-Hampshire*, and opposite the mouth of *West-River*, from which its name arises.

The Mountain, in all its parts, contains about three thousand acres of land, and is very uneven. The south and west ascents, very steep : the north and east not so steep, but very ragged.

On the south side of the Mountain, about eighty rods from the summit, there has been an eruption,—perhaps not within the present, or last century. The peasants, in the neighbourhood of the Mountain, discovered this place, and became possessed with the idea of gold dust being in the Mountain, and that it melted down into a solid body, by the extreme heat of  
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the Mountain, at the time the eruption happened : in consequence of which, they went to work in search of the supposed treasure ; and after fruitless searches, formed larger connections, entered into covenant with the proprietors of the land, and with one another, to make search for all kinds of mine and mineral. They have dug down about seventy or eighty feet ; and in some places, where the rocks permit, twenty feet wide ; but they are now impeded by the rocks, and the water that comes from the Mountain above the hole. The external parts of the hole is entirely rock, and in many places much burnt and softened. There are small holes in various places of the rock where they dig, like the arch of an oven, and the rock seems to be dissolved by heat ; the cinders and melted dross adhere to it, and hang down in drops like small icicles, something resembling in colour, the cinders of a furnace, or black glass, and it is so fastened to the rock, that it appears as if it was originally part of the same.

They dig out of the hole, near the surface, various strata of earth, or mineral ; and in digging a drain to let out the water, they find a great plenty of the same kind of earth ; and as it lies in the ground, the different complections are very curious to observe : there is a very fine soft yellow-oker, which, burnt, makes a good Spanish brown ; there is another strata, resembling levigated antimony, the particles very soft ; another of a faint yellow, fine, soft, and very greasy, which quality is not lost by lying on the surface of the earth, for a long time, exposed to the sun and air ; there is another that resembles a peach blossom in colour, but the texture more like the oker : and these various mineral, or earth, are not intermixed. At the mouth of the hole, there was blown out melted dross, which stuck to

the rocks ; and in the hole was found various pieces of stone, which appeared to be dissolved by fire, and the sides of the rock blackened by fire ; so that this hole must have been filled up since the eruption took place.

The miners inform me, that in the morning they frequently observe upon the earth that has been thrown out, something very white, and by touching it with their tongue suppose it to be salt-petre.

In my late search, I went to the top of the Mountain, directly above the place where the before-mentioned eruption happened, to see if there was a crater. The peak is small, and there are about twenty rods of ground on the summit, which is rather hollow, where water stands in a wet season (as is common in mountainous countries) but no regular crater. The hollow is oblong, and would have been, probably, had there been a great volcano (unless the heat had been so intense as to have dissolved a prodigious ridge of solid rock, about fifty feet to the west of this hole) so to the top of the Mountain, which forms one side of a large dingle, from the top to the bottom of the Mountain, four or five hundred feet perpendicular ; where immense quantities of rock have fallen down, occasioned, probably, by explosions in the Mountains, or earthquakes. That there have been various explosions in the Mountain, is beyond a doubt, and in various places, which have occasioned great quantities of stone and rock to fall from the Mountain ; but I am inclined to think these explosions are not frequent, as formerly, even fifty years ago ; for I am told by ancient people of veracity, who formerly dwelt at *Fort-Dummer* (opposite the Mountain) that there were frequently explosions, and fire and smoke were emitted.

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The last explosion that I recollect, happened about five or six years ago, the noise resembling that of an earthquake, and the earth trembled considerably where I was, about four or five miles from the Mountain ; my herd of cattle were greatly terrified thereby, and run together through fear.

That there has been something more than a sudden explosion, every one that views it must be convinced : but that there has been any considerable volcano, so as to cause the earth above to fall in or settle, no one, I presume, will pretend.

I am, Sir, with great respect,

your very humble servant,

DANIEL JONES.

*The Rev.* JOSEPH WILLARD.

